

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A master transport apparatus which transports a master to an exposure apparatus having a master stage, a prealignment device which prealigns a master to be transferred to said master stage, and a manipulating mechanism which transports the master or exchanges two masters between said master stage and prealignment device, the exposure apparatus being arranged to expose a substrate with a pattern of the master, the master transport apparatus comprising:

a transport mechanism which holds the master with a holding portion that can hold at least two masters and transports the master; and

a control section which controls said transport mechanism,

wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that should be used in a first turn for exposure is to be mounted on said master stage, a master to be used in a second turn is provided to said prealignment device, and a master to be used in a third turn is held by said holding portion.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that has been used for exposure in said exposure apparatus should be used for next exposure in a turn a number of which is not larger than

that of a predetermined turn, the master is held by said prealignment device if the turn thereof is second, and the master is held by said holding portion if the turn thereof is third, and controls said transport mechanism such that, as far as a number of the turn of the master is larger than that of the predetermined turn, the master is returned to a master supply section.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that should be used first for exposure is to be mounted on said master stage, a master to be used in a fourth turn is provided to an additional device that inspects, manipulates, or processes the master.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said additional device includes a device that inspects a foreign substance attaching to the master.

5. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, as far as a master that has been used for exposure in said exposure apparatus should be used for next exposure in a turn a number of which is not larger than that of a predetermined turn, the master is held by said prealignment device if the turn thereof is second, the master is held by said holding portion if the turn thereof is third, and the master is provided

to said additional device if the turn thereof is fourth, and controls said transport mechanism such that, as far as a number of the turn of the master is larger than that of the predetermined turn, the master is returned to a master supply section.

6. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said master supply section has a mechanism that holds a cassette to accommodate the master and opens/closes said cassette, and said transport mechanism receives the master from said cassette or transfers a master to said cassette.

7. An exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate with a pattern of a master, comprising:

a master stage;

15 a prealignment device which prealigns a master to be transferred to said master stage;

a manipulating mechanism which transports the master or exchanges two masters between said master stage and prealignment device;

20 a transport mechanism which holds a master with a holding portion that can hold at least two masters and transports the master; and

a control section which controls said transport mechanism,

25 wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that should be used in a first turn is to be mounted on said

master stage, a master to be used in a second turn is provided to said prealignment device, and a master to be used in a third turn is held by said holding portion.

5 8. The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that should be used first for exposure is to be mounted on said master stage, a master to be used in a fourth turn is provided to an
10 additional device that inspects, manipulates, or processes the master.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said additional device includes a device that inspects a foreign substance attaching to the master.

15 10. A master transport method of transporting a master to an exposure apparatus having a master stage, a prealignment device which prealigns a master to be transferred to the master stage, and a manipulating mechanism which transports the master or exchanging two
20 masters between the master stage and prealignment device, the exposure apparatus being arranged to expose a substrate with a pattern of the master, the method including:

 a control step of controlling a transport
25 mechanism which holds the master with a holding portion that can hold at least two masters and transports the master,

wherein in the control step, the transport mechanism is controlled such that, when a master that should be used in a first turn for exposure is to be mounted on the master stage, a master to be used in a second turn is provided to the prealignment device, and a master to be used in a third turn is held by the holding portion.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein in the control step, the transport mechanism is controlled such that, when the master that should be used first for exposure is to be mounted on the master stage, a master to be used in a fourth turn is provided to an additional device that inspects, manipulates, or processes the master.

12. A device manufacturing method including steps of:
arranging a first master to be used in the first turn on the master stage in accordance with the master transport method according to claim 10;

arranging a second master to be used in the second turn on the master stage in place of the first master; and

arranging a third master to be used in the third turn on the master stage in place of the second master,

wherein each time one of the first to third masters is arranged on the master stage, a pattern of the arranged master is transferred to a substrate.

13. The method according to claim 12, further

including a step of arranging a fourth master to be used in a fourth turn on the master stage in place of the third master, wherein

each time one of the first to fourth masters is arranged on the master stage, a pattern of the arranged master is transferred to the substrate.

14. A master transport apparatus which transports a master to an exposure apparatus having a master stage, a prealignment device which prealigns a master to be transferred to said master stage, and a manipulating mechanism which transports the master or exchanges two masters between said master stage and prealignment device, the exposure apparatus being arranged to expose a substrate with a pattern of the master, the master transport apparatus comprising:

a transport mechanism which holds the master with a holding portion that can hold at least two masters and transports the master; and

a control section which controls said transport mechanism,

wherein said control section controls said transport mechanism such that, when a master that has been used for exposure in said exposure apparatus should be used for next exposure in a turn a number of which exceeds a number of locations, including said master stage, prealignment device, and holding portion, where the master is to be held or kept waiting, the

master that has been used for exposure is returned to a
master supply section.